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ABSTRACT

This user's guide provides an overview of an approach to learning about different cultures that is based on an understanding of young adolescent development. It highlights three teaching methods that are considered of particular importance to the educational process: (1) the integration of materials in social studies and language arts classes; (2) the development of cooperative-learning groups; and (3) the utilization of student and teacher resources and interests. The bulk of the report concerns specific educational activities and learning exercises divided into two main groups: "Learning About World Cultures" and "Creating a New Culture." The goals of "Learning About World Cultures" are to compare and contrast three to five widely diverse cultures and identify factors influencing cultural development. Students begin by studying their own cultures and then study two to four specific families from different geographic locations and historical periods. Students also learn certain social science concepts needed in comparing and contrasting the various cultures. The goal of "Creating a New Culture" is to have students gain firsthand experience in creating a culture and to increase their ability to work cooperatively with other students using small-group interaction. Detailed information about how to structure the cooperative-learning groups, how to evaluate students' work, and where to read more about collaborative learning is provided. (GLR)

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